

Business Incubator Kočevje

Podjetniški inkubator Kočevje

Operational Action Plan For Sustainable Energy Transition and Youth Employment

Operativni akcijski načrt za trajnostni prehod
s področja energetske učinkovitosti in zaposlovanja mladih

Erasmus+ K210: Green for Life

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VISION

As the organisation primarily responsible for promoting economic development in the municipality of Kočevje, we are keenly aware of the importance of investing in the development of younger generations. Young people are key players in shaping the future direction of the economy and quality of life. Their involvement and support are key to the long-term sustainable development of our municipality.

In the past, we may not have put enough emphasis on the green transition, energy efficiency and job creation. However, a recent application to the Green4Life project has encouraged us to start analysing our current situation in more depth and to think about the next steps. We are aware of the need to focus our activities on sustainable practices and to create new employment opportunities for young people in green sectors.

We believe in a sustainable future, which will be achieved through a green transition and the creation of green jobs for young people. This will be key to improving our city's energy efficiency and living conditions.

That is why we will organise proactive activities and trainings that will promote technological careers and facilitate the transition of young people to green careers. Our aim is to start raising awareness and educating the environment with content that will provide the necessary knowledge and skills to work in the renewable energy sector.

We aim to create conditions that will allow young families to stay and develop their lives in our environment. Our aim is to create a community that is attractive to live in, with a high quality of life and many opportunities for personal and professional development. We believe that this can be achieved through sustainable practices that integrate environmental as well as social and economic aspects.

Our organisation has a good overview of what is happening in the local environment and is well connected with the municipality of Kočevje, other public institutions, companies and educational institutions. Together we will create the conditions for sustainable development and a better quality of life for all residents. Our goal is to create a community where sustainable practices and green jobs will enable young people to stay, develop and contribute to the development of our municipality.

By bringing together different stakeholders, raising awareness and education, and taking concrete action in the workplace, we will contribute to the long-term well-being of our community. Our organisation will commit itself to a vision of a sustainable future that will bring many benefits to the local community. We recognise that achieving these goals will require the cooperation and integration of different stakeholders.

Our vision for 2030 will bring many benefits to the local environment, including increased energy efficiency, lower energy costs and new employment opportunities for young people, laying the foundations for a sustainable and prosperous future.

DIAGNOSIS

SWOT ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATION

▫ **ADVANTAGES**

- existing community of entrepreneurs in the area
- good cooperation with all local institutions
- cooperation with established companies from the local environment
- experience in obtaining grants and subsidies for research and development in the field of energy efficiency
- workshops for young people and cooperation with schools in training teachers in the use of new technologies
- implementation of various programmes for deprived target groups
- new business incubator, built in 2021, is an example of good practice in energy efficient public buildings

▫ **WEAKNESSES**

- energy efficiency is not a priority issue in the organisation's business
- no local strategy for energy transition and therefore no "push" to include it in annual plans
- energy transition is not a topic that can be included in the training workshops for entrepreneurs
- the incubator does not employ experts with specific skills in energy efficiency
- the incubator staff does not have the experience and references from energy efficiency projects to be able to provide advice

▫ **OPPORTUNITIES**

- subsidies for companies wishing to invest in renewable energy infrastructure
- calls for tenders for companies to develop products with better energy efficiency
- calls for tenders and subsidies to improve the energy efficiency of heating appliances for deprived target groups
- funding for youth workshops on energy efficiency through calls for tenders
- participation in the local green energy transition strategy
- networking on international projects with partners who have already succeeded in engaging young people in energy efficiency issues
- rich renewable energy area (forest/woodland)
- lot of untapped potential in the field of sustainable infrastructure (construction, heating, public transport, etc.)
- many opportunities for eco-tourism

▫ **DANGERS**

- climate change could have an impact on the reduction of forest biomass and the change in the structure of forest species.
- inadequate tender conditions for companies investing in this field
- lack of experts in energy efficiency and energy resource management
- negative media portrayal of energy efficiency as a topic for young people
- the unwillingness of educational institutions to address the topic of energy efficiency in various subjects
- lack of funding in tenders for the replacement of heating appliances
- if something is not compulsory, we as a nation like to put it off until later

PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED

1. Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's green strategy (implementation of the new frameworks)
 - 1.1 Communicating good practices on energy efficiency in the local environment (this topic should be addressed with priority).
 - 1.2 Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's Green Action Plan - from the perspective of young people
2. Use of financial incentives for energy efficiency
 - 2.1 Encouraging companies to make technological innovations that improve the energy efficiency of the final product or production process
 - 2.2 Educating and advising citizens on the use and purchase of energy efficient appliances
3. The future for young people in the local environment
 - 3.1 Linking young people and local businesses
 - 3.2 Exposing young people to different careers (green jobs)
 - 3.3 Learning the technological skills as the basis for the green jobs of the future

EVALUATION OF INTERNAL CAPACITIES AND RESOURCES

- 1) Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's green strategy
With its current team, the incubator can contribute to the municipality's green strategy with its experience in international projects, working with young people and deprived groups.
- 2) Use of financial incentives for energy efficiency
Our organisation can continue to provide one-to-one advice to fast-growing companies, identifying projects and determining their suitability for applying for tenders, and in the future also connecting them with external experts who can help them to prepare a tender application. We can also provide advice to citizens from disadvantaged groups on the use and subsidies of the state for the purchase of energy efficient heating appliances.

3) The future for young people in the local environment

We have the relevant know-how to connect young people and local businesses with our existing staff, as well as the Youth Career Centre projects in place. However, there is a shortage of human resources where we could further develop the teaching of technological skills as a foundation for technology based careers.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Employees need to receive additional training on the topic of green transition and energy efficiency in order to be competent in integrating or building on these topics into their current activities.

CAPACITY GAPS

The Incubator as an organisation has only an indirect focus on energy efficiency, as it does not have the strategic orientation or financial resources to directly support such activities.

HUMAN RESOURCES

New HR resources are needed. Incubator needs to recruit new people with specific skills in energy efficiency and to train existing staff to gain knowledge and learn more about the topic.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In our case, these are related to human resources and investments in technology that can further help the incubator to facilitate the green transition theme in experiential workshops with young people.

RISKS, THREATS AND CHALLENGES

1. Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's green strategy

1.1 Communicating good practices on energy efficiency in the local environment

- Lack of awareness and interest among the population: people do not understand the importance of energy efficiency, which reduces participation in programmes.
- Inadequate communication strategy: Poor communication leads to confusion or disengagement of residents.
- Lack of resources and support: Without the necessary resources, it is difficult to develop and implement effective communication strategies.
- Negative public attitudes towards change: Resistance to new developments makes it difficult to implement energy efficiency programs.
- Lack of skills and knowledge: Without trained staff, it is difficult to implement and communicate energy efficiency initiatives.

1.2 Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's Green Action Plan - from the perspective of young people:

- Lack of clear roles and responsibilities: without clear roles and responsibilities, confusion arises in the cooperation process.
- Differing expectations and objectives: Disagreements between the municipality and the incubator can hinder the progress of the project.
- Inconsistency and changes in leadership: Changes in leadership can affect the consistency of cooperation and continuity of projects..

2. Use of financial incentives for energy efficiency

2.1 Encouraging companies to make technological innovations that improve the energy efficiency of the final product or production process

- Lack of trained advisors: without trained staff, it is difficult to support businesses in taking advantage of financial incentives.
- Insufficient understanding of added value: If the incubator cannot recognise the benefits of financial incentives, it may miss out on opportunities for businesses.
- Limited links with the local economy: Lack of links with the local economy hinders tailoring incentives to the needs of businesses.
- Limited financial capacity of companies: Despite incentives, companies may have limited resources to invest in innovation.
- Inadequate tender conditions for local companies: Sometimes the conditions for obtaining funding in a tender are very specific and companies do not have the appropriate references or cannot meet the required conditions.

2.2 Educating and advising citizens on the use and purchase of energy efficient appliances:

- Limited availability of consultancy: budget constraints can limit the availability of consultancy services for citizens.
- Insufficient skills and competences of counsellors: Lack of qualified staff can lead to inadequate counselling.
- Limited funding for counselling of energy-poor families: Reduced funding undermines support to energy-poor families.

3. The future for young people in the local environment

3.1 Linking young people and local businesses

- Lack of interest of young people in local businesses and recognition of local opportunities: young people do not see opportunities in the local environment.
- Lack of infrastructure to support collaboration: There is a need to ensure the continuity of the implementation of networking programmes between young people and businesses.
- Lack of engagement of local businesses in attracting and employing young people: Local businesses should do more to attract young workers.

3.2 Exposing young people to different careers (green jobs):

- Lack of motivation or interest: poor motivation in organising events can lead to lower participation of young people.
- Limited resources and lack of motivation: Limited resources can affect the organisation and promotion of events to showcase careers.

3.3 Learning the technological skills as the basis for the green jobs of the future:

- Limited funding for training: limited resources can affect the scope and quality of training activities. In particular, financial resources from the government calls for tenders for digital transformation are crucial here.
- Lack of professional staff: Lack of qualified trainers can hamper the delivery of training programmes.

OBJECTIVES

Priority area	Objective	Success indicators
1. Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's green strategy		
1.1 Communicating good practices on energy efficiency in the local environment	Raising awareness of the local community on the importance of the municipality's green strategy	The Green Transition and thus the topic of energy efficiency becomes an important issue at different levels and in the media in the municipality
1.2 Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's Green Action Plan - from the perspective of young people	Preparation of a municipal green strategy within 2 years	Establishment of a working group at municipal level for the preparation of a green strategy; Content and structure of the municipality's Green Action Plan agreed
2. Use of financial incentives for energy efficiency		
2.1 Encouraging companies to make technological innovations that improve the energy efficiency of the final product or production process	To help two local fast growing companies to obtain funding in innovation calls	Identification of a potential project to apply for a call for proposals and the companies' readiness to implement the project
2.2 Educating and advising citizens on the use and purchase of energy efficient appliances	Assistance with consultancy and subsidy application to the EKO Sklad for at least 10 socially disadvantaged families	At least 10 consultancy sessions on EKO Sklad call for proposals for replacement of heating appliances
3. The future for young people in the local environment		

Priority area	Objective	Success indicators
3.1 Linking young people and local businesses	At least 50 opportunities for young people in local companies and institutions published annually on the Kočevje Career Portal	Willingness of local companies and institutions to publish a concrete opportunity for young people on the web portal
3.2 Exposing young people to different careers (green jobs)	At least 300 children from primary schools from at least 5 municipalities to participate in the Festival of Professions annually	Organisation of an annual event, the Festival of Professions, at the Kočevje Sports Hall
3.3 Learning the technological skills as the basis for the green jobs of the future	Involve at least 200 children per year in training to raise digital competences	Organise at least 20 workshops per year on raising young people's digital competences

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Priority area	Strategic actions
1. Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's green strategy	
1.1 Communicating good practices on energy efficiency in the local environment	Establishing a working group/partnership to start collecting examples of best green practices and communicating them through various media channels
1.2 Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's Green Action Plan - from the perspective of young people	Establishment of a working group / partnership to start the elaboration of a green strategy for the municipality Additional training on the preparation of green action plans for the city/municipality/region
2. Use of financial incentives for energy efficiency	
2.1 Encouraging companies to make technological innovations that improve the energy efficiency of the final product or production process	Building trust with local businesses to share their innovation plans with the incubator
2.2 Educating and advising citizens on the use and purchase of energy efficient appliances	Cooperation with the "Eko Sklad" in the field of advising citizens from socially disadvantaged families on subsidies and the purchase of energy efficient heating appliances
3. The future for young people in the local environment	



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Priority area	Strategic actions
3.1 Linking young people and local businesses	Increasing the capacity of the Youth Career Centre team to communicate more frequently with local businesses to promote and communicate opportunities for young people
3.2 Exposing young people to different careers (green jobs)	Applying for calls for tenders to increase the level of funding for the Career Centre for Youth
3.3 Learning the technological skills as the basis for the green jobs of the future	Obtaining funding at tenders for the implementation of training courses to raise young people's digital competences

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Priority Area	Objective	Strategic Action	Budget/ Responsible Party	Deadline	Success Indicators
1.1 Communicating good practices on energy efficiency in the local environment	Raising awareness of the local community on the importance of the municipality's green strategy	Establishing a working group/partnership to start collecting examples of best green practices and communicating them through various media channels	Budget: 20.000 EUR Občina Kočevje Podjetniški inkubator Kočevje	2 years	The green transition, and thus energy efficiency, becomes an important topic at various levels and in the media in the municipality
1.2 Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's Green Action Plan - from the perspective of young people	Preparation of a municipal green strategy within 2 years	Establishment of a working group / partnership to start the elaboration of a green strategy for the municipality	Občina Kočevje Podjetniški inkubator Kočevje	1 year	A municipal-level working group is set up to prepare a green strategy
1.2 Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's Green Action Plan - from the perspective of young people	Preparation of a municipal green strategy within 2 years	Additional training on the preparation of green action plans for the city/municipality /region	Občina Kočevje Podjetniški inkubator Kočevje	2 years	Agreed content and structure of the municipality's Green Action Plan



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Priority Area	Objective	Strategic Action	Budget/ Responsible Party	Deadline	Success Indicators
2.1 Encouraging companies to make technological innovations that improve the energy efficiency of the final product or production process	To help two local fast growing companies to obtain funding in innovation calls	Building trust with local businesses to share their innovation plans with the incubator	Podjetniški inkubator Kočevje	2 years	Identification of a potential project to apply for a call for proposals and company commitment to implement the project
2.2 Educating and advising citizens on the use and purchase of energy efficient appliances	Assistance with consultancy and subsidy application to the EcoFund for at least 10 socially disadvantaged families	Cooperation with the "Eko sklad" in the field of advising citizens from socially disadvantaged families on subsidies and the purchase of energy efficient heating appliances	Ljudska univerza Kočevje	summer 2024	Obtaining funding to carry out consultancy activities at the EKO Sklad
			20.000 EUR Ljudska univerza Kočevje	summer 2024	At least 1 mentor trained to carry out consultations
			5.000 EUR Ljudska univerza Kočevje	End of 2024 and then annually	At least 10 counselling sessions on applying to the EKO Sklad call for proposals for the replacement of heating installations
3.1 Linking young people and local businesses	At least 50 opportunities for young people in local companies and institutions published annually on the Kočevje Career Portal	Increasing the capacity of the Youth Career Centre team to communicate more frequently with local businesses to promote and communicate opportunities for young people	5.000 EUR Ljudska univerza Kočevje Podjetniški inkubator Kočevje	07 / 2025	The willingness of local businesses and institutions to post a concrete opportunity for young people on a public web portal 1) WEB PORTAL 2) PARTICIPATING COMPANIES 3) THE TEAM MANAGING THE PORTAL



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Priority Area	Objective	Strategic Action	Budget/ Responsible Party	Deadline	Success Indicators
3.2 Exposing young people to different careers (green jobs)	At least 300 children from primary schools from at least 5 municipalities to participate in the Festival of Professions annually	Applying for calls for tenders to increase the level of funding for the Career Centre for Youth	10.000 EUR Ljudska univerza Kočevje	09 / 2024	Organisation of the annual Festival of Professions event at the Kočevje Sports Hall 1) Organisation of the Festival of Professions
			1.500 EUR Ljudska univerza Kočevje	12 / 2024	2) Successful application to calls for funding for the Career Centre for Youth
3.3 Learning the technological skills as the basis for the green jobs of the future	Involve at least 200 children per year in training to raise digital competences	Obtaining funding at tenders for the implementation of training courses to raise young people's digital competences	35.000 EUR Podjetniški inkubator Kočevje	02 / 2025	Organising at least 20 workshops a year in the local area on raising young people's digital competences

INDICATORS

Priority area	Indicators
1. Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's green strategy	
1.1 Communicating good practices on energy efficiency in the local environment	Number of examples of green practices collected and recorded in the local environment
1.2 Participation in the elaboration of the municipality's Green Action Plan - from the perspective of young people	Number of meetings of the working group/partnership set up to develop the municipality's green strategy Number of training sessions on the preparation of green action plans for the city/municipality/region level
2. Use of financial incentives for energy efficiency	



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Priority area	Indicators
2.1 Encouraging companies to make technological innovations that improve the energy efficiency of the final product or production process	Number of local companies applying for innovation calls
2.2 Educating and advising citizens on the use and purchase of energy efficient appliances	Number of consultations provided to citizens from socially disadvantaged families on subsidies and the purchase of energy efficient heating appliances
3. The future for young people in the local environment	
3.1 Linking young people and local businesses	Number of opportunities for young people in local businesses and institutions
3.2 Exposing young people to different careers (green jobs)	Number of careers showcased at the Festival of Professions Number of primary and secondary school children attending the Festival of Professions
3.3 Learning the technological skills as the basis for the green jobs of the future	Number of young people participating annually in training courses to raise young people's digital competences

DISSEMINATION

Activity description	Year	Budget	Success indicators
Presentation: Presenting the action plan at incubator's staff meeting and supervisory board	2024	300 €	Staff endorsing the implementation of the action plan after the presentation
Events: Organising a local event "Green 4 Life conference" to present good practices of energy efficiency and present the outline of the action plan	2024	3.000 €	Organised conference in Kočevje attended by all project partners and local stakeholders
Website and Social Media: Publishing best practices and action plan presentations by partners in Green For Life project from the Green 4 Life final conference as videos on YouTube	2024	300 €	Published videos on YouTube
Collaborations: Cooperation with Municipality of Kočevje to learn about and include the action plan elements in the local green strategy	2024, 2025	500 €	Strategic actions and objectives included in the municipality green strategy
Website and Social Media: Publishing of the final action plan document online and promote it on social media	2024	300 €	Published action plan



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Publications: Publishing an article about the action plan and the Green For Life project in local newspaper Kočevska	2024	300 €	Published article in newspaper Kočevska
Website and Social Media: Publishing an article online about each identified local green practice and promote it on social media channels	2024, 2025	3.000 €	5 (five) published local green practices on website and/or social media

CONTRIBUTORS AND INSIGHTS

The "Operational Action Plan for a Sustainable Transition in Energy Efficiency and Youth Employment" is the result of the Erasmus+ project "KA210: Green for Life". Through learning from different partners and experts from different countries, we have learnt the methodology and developed an action plan that reflects the organisation's capacity to contribute to the green transition.

The team involved in the preparation of the plan: Marko Stijepić, Adem Ibrahimović, Bojan Sovič (all from the Business Incubator Kočevje – Podjetniški inkubator Kočevje).